

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00
PRS-01 IO-13 /086 W
-----050440 091400Z /50

R 091352Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6859
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USMISSION USUN
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 23049

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: FR UR GW HU CH VN
SUBJ: BARRE SHARPLY STEPS UP INTERNATIONAL ROLE TO
FURTHER ENHANCE IMAGE

1. MATIGNON SOURCES CONFIRM THAT PRIME MINISTER BARRE
WILL UNDERTAKE A WHOLE SERIES OF IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS BETWEEN NOW AND THE MARCH LEGISLATIVE
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ELECTIONS. TECHNICALLY THESE TRIPS CAN BE PRESENTED AS
MERELY A NORMAL EXERCISE OF PRIME MINISTERIAL
FUNCTIONS - PARTICULARLY DURING A YEAR IN WHICH GISCARD
HIMSELF HAS CHOSEN TO REDUCE TRAVEL TO A MINIMUM.
MATIGNON PRIVATELY ADMITS THAT INTENSE INTERNATIONAL
SCHEDULING IN COMING MONTHS, WHICH IS IN SHARP CONTRAST
WITH PRECEDING YEAR IN WHICH BARRE STUCK LARGELY TO HIS

DOMESTIC KNITTING, IS OBVIOUSLY INTENDED, BY BARRE AND GISCARD, TO ENHANCE BARRE'S DOMESTIC STATURE BEFORE THE ELECTIONS.

2. IN SUM, IN ADDITION TO HIS TRIP TO THE US, WE ARE TOLD THAT BARRE WILL VISIT THE USSR SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 2; HUNGARY AROUND THE NOVEMBER 1 WEEKEND; SYRIA NOVEMBER 26-28; THE FRG FOR A LUNCH OR DINNER WITH SCHMIDT SOMETIME IN NOVEMBER; AND CHINA EARLY NEXT YEAR. A TRIP TO AFRICA IS UNDER INTERNAL CONSIDERATION BUT HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED ON.

3. AS REGARDS THE USSR VISIT, BARRE WILL LEAD THE FRENCH DELEGATION TO THE NEXT MIXED COMMISSION MEETING--TECHNICALLY IN HIS CAPACITY AS FINANCE MINISTER. MATIGNON EXPLAINS THAT, BEFORE BREZHNEV'S RECENT VISIT HERE, THE SOVIETS HAD IN FACT EXPRESSED THEIR "EAGERNESS" THAT BARRE HIMSELF COME TO THE USSR FOR THIS OCCASION RATHER THAN SENDING HIS DEPUTY, AND THAT GISCARD GAVE BREZHNEV HIS OK AT RAMBOUILLET. EVEN THOUGH FRANCO-SOVIET MIXED COMMISSION MEETINGS ARE RELATIVELY ROUTINE PERIODIC EVENTS, MATIGNON - PROBABLY CORRECTLY - INTERPRETS THIS KREMLIN INVITATION TO BE A POSSIBLE SIGNAL TO FRENCH PUBLIC OF LONG-SUSPECTED SOVIET PREFERENCE FOR THE MAJORITY IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS, PARTICULARLY SINCE BARRE IS ALSO BEING

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INVITED TO HAVE "BROADER DISCUSSIONS" NOT ONLY WITH GROMYKO BUT BREZHNEV HIMSELF. THAT THIS MOSCOW TRIP WILL ALSO SERVE TO "BALANCE" BARRE'S US VISIT IN MINDS OF MORE NATIONALISTICALLY INCLINED VOTERS IN FRANCE HAS, OF COURSE, ALSO NOT ESCAPED MATIGNON

ATTENTION.

4. THE OTHER MAJOR TRIP, THE CHINA VISIT, OBVIOUSLY WILL ALSO ENHANCE BARRE'S STATURE AS A STATESMAN. MATIGNON INDICATES THAT THE CHINESE RECENTLY RENEWED TO BARRE, FOR LATER THIS YEAR, THE INVITATION PREVIOUSLY ACCEPTED BY CHIRAC, AND THAT FOR SCHEDULING (OR PERHAPS FOR MAXIMUM DOMESTIC IMPACT?) REASONS, THE TRIP WAS PUT OFF TO EARLY NEXT YEAR. BARRE WILL IN EFFECT BE RETURNING TENG HSIAO-P'ING'S VISIT TO FRANCE OF 1975, AND SO WILL BE IN THE UNIQUE POSITION OF REOPENING FRENCH RELATIONS WITH TENG AFTER LATTER'S SECOND REHABILITATION.

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5. THE TRIPS TO HUNGARY, SYRIA AND THE FRG, WHILE
INTRINSICALLY SLIGHTLY LESS IMPORTANT, WILL
NEVERTHELESS ADD FURTHER WEIGHT TO BARRE'S EFFORT TO
PROJECT AN IMAGE OF MUCH GREATER INTERNATIONAL
INVOLVEMENT. THE TRIP TO BUDAPEST, LONG UNDER
CONSIDERATION, IS INTENDED AS A CONSOLATION PRIZE TO
THE HUNGARIANS FOR A GISCARD VISIT, WHICH GISCARD HAD
PROMISED, BUT LATER RETRACTED WHEN HE DECIDED TO LIMIT
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HIS INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS THIS YEAR. MRS. BARRE'S
HUNGARIAN ANCESTRY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ADD TO THE WARMTH
OF THEIR RECEPTION AND PRESS COVERAGE.

6. SIMILARLY BARRE'S VISIT TO SYRIA RESPONDS TO ADDAD'S VISIT WITH GISCARD EARLIER THIS YEAR AND, MATIGNON SAID, REFLECTS GOF'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE ME. BARRE'S MEETING WITH SCHMIDT, WHICH WILL NO DOUBT FOCUS ON GENUINELY IMPORTANT BILATERAL ECONOMIC AND ENERGY PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS THE POSSIBLE TRIP TO AFRICA, WILL ROUND OUT A CALENDER AIMED AT DEMONSTRATING BARRE'S UNIVERSAL COMPETENCE AND INVOLVEMENT.

7. WE SHOULD ADD THAT MITIGNON FLATLY DENIES STORY IN THIS WEEK'S LE POINT TO EFFECT THAT BARRE IS ALSO THINKING OF TRIP TO VIETNAM.

8. COMMENT: BARRE'S INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT REINFORCES THE IMPRESSION THAT HE INTENDS TO TAKE THE HIGH-ROAD" APPROACH TO THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, PRESENTING HIMSELF IN THE FINAL STAGES NOT ONLY AS A GOOD ECONOMIST AND ADMISISTRATOR BUT AS AN ACCEPTED SENIOR STATESMAN. PARTICULARLY SINCE MITTERRAND WILL BE SOMEWHAT LESS WELL POSITIONED TO PLAY THIS GAME, MATIGNON SOURCES THINK IT MAY -- OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL -- PAY CERTAIN BENEFITS. WE OURSELVES RESERVE JUDGMENT.
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